

Meanwhile, the administration wants to cut grants for first responders, and the Coast Guard is struggling with an inadequate force size.

It doesn't make sense. It simply doesn't make sense. The American people know that, which is why they voted the way they did last November. More than 60 percent of Americans are in favor of a phased withdrawal. They don't want to pass this problem off to the next President and another Congress, and they sure don't want another American servicemember to die or lose a limb while elected representatives put their own political comfort over the wishes of their constituents.

Polls continue to show voters strongly oppose the war in Iraq, and that is one of the top issues on which they will be voting. A recent Washington Post/ABC poll found that 65 percent of Americans disapprove of the situation in Iraq and 56 percent disapprove strongly. The same poll also found this is the second most important issue to voters in November, behind the economy and jobs. And a recent Gallup poll showed a majority of Americans, 56 percent, do not believe the surge is working and want a timetable to get out of Iraq. Those Americans need to be heard, and that is what we are trying to do with this important debate.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

PROVIDING FOR THE SAFE REDEPLOYMENT OF UNITED STATES TROOPS FROM IRAQ—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 2633, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to consider S. 2633, a bill to provide for the safe redeployment of United States troops from Iraq.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, today we are here to address the issue of the Iraq war, and many are saying: Well, why should we address the Iraq war again? Because, obviously, it is still going on; there is still no direction in terms of political progress; the Shiites, the Sunnis, and the Kurds still have their age-old enmities; the goals of the

Iraqi Government set by this Government for them have not been met; but most of all, I think we are here to debate this issue, at least in my judgment, because we are at a turning point in terms of the debate in Iraq. That turning point—the case against this war—has been building for a long time. As we debate this bill on Iraq, we are at a turning point in the argument against the war. We have always been aware of the cost in life, both American and Iraqi, and we have known how severe that cost is. Despite the good works of our troops, we are continually troubled by the tragic loss of life. The American people are baffled by the lack of political progress and, most of all, the American people are beginning to comprehend the eye-popping figures of what this war is costing our budget and our economy. It is becoming clear to all Americans—Republicans, Democrats, and Independents—that by continuing to spend huge amounts on Iraq, we are prevented from spending on desired goals and needs here at home.

So the turning point is this: The lack of progress, particularly on the political front, continues; the tragic loss of life continues; but the cost of the war and the inability to use those funds to help us here at home, the cost of the war and the inability to use those funds to properly go after the most dangerous nexus of terror, which is a thousand miles to the east—Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran—is now becoming a clinching argument that we must quickly and soon change the course, the direction, of this war in Iraq.

I went to Iraq over New Year's. I spent time with our soldiers. They are wonderful. They are awe-inspiring. The troops are awe-inspiring, from the private I met from Queens, just out of high school, who had enlisted 8 months previously and was in Iraq 3 weeks, to the majors and captains who had served 10 years in the Army or the Marines and had made the military their life's work—they see a greater good than just themselves, and it is wonderful—all the way to the generals. I spent time with General Petraeus at a New Year's Eve dinner. I spent time with General Odierno. They are fine, intelligent, good people.

When I went to Iraq, I assured our soldiers, from the private to the generals, that one good thing that would come out of this war is the esteem that we hold for both the military and our soldiers would be greater when the war finished than when it started—a far different cry than the Vietnam War, which is one of the most disgraceful times in America, when our soldiers were too often vilified for simply serving our country.

But after I left Iraq, I came to this conclusion, Mr. President, and that is that even if we were to follow General Petraeus's game plan—which, of course, involves not just military success in security but winning over the hearts and minds of the people—it

would take a minimum of 5 years and have about a 50 percent chance of success of bringing stability—not democracy but at least stability—to large portions of Iraq. That is not the military's fault, and that is not America's fault. That is because of the age-old enmities within Iraq—the Sunnis, the Shiites, and the Kurds, and then within the groups themselves. It would be very hard to create permanent stability without a permanent and large structure of troops.

Now, I ask you, stability in Iraq—a worthy goal, but is it on your top-five list for America? Is it on any American's top-five list? A few, maybe, not the vast majority. We have many other higher goals that cost the same dollars and need the same attention and energy that is now diverted to Iraq. Our education system is declining, our health care system doesn't cover people, and we are paying \$3.30 for gas because we don't have an energy policy. And even if your goals are just foreign policy, shouldn't we be taking the time and effort that is all now focused on Iraq, as well as the dollars, and spending more focus on the dangerous triangle composed of Pakistan, Iran, and Afghanistan? Of course. We must ask ourselves: Is it worth spending trillions of dollars needed elsewhere on such an uncertain and unpredictable outcome?

So the debate is changing. The costs of Iraq, the simple costs alone, are weighing too heavily on the American people, the American Government, and on our national purpose. While admirable as a goal, it is hardly the most important goal we have in this changing and dangerous and exciting world in which we live. The cost of the war has become the \$800 billion gorilla in the room. The backbreaking cost of this war to the American families, the Federal budget, and the entire economy is becoming one of the first things, after loss of life, people think about.

A report issued by the Joint Economic Committee, which I chair, estimated that the total costs of the war will double what the administration has spent directly on the war alone—\$1.3 trillion through 2008. And that is a conservative estimate. According to budget figures on Iraq spending for 2000, the Bush administration wants to spend \$430 million a day on Iraq. For 1 day of the war in Iraq, we could enroll an additional 58,000 children in Head Start per year, we could put an additional 88,900 police officers on our streets per year, we could hire another 10,000 Border Patrol agents per year, we could make college more affordable for 163,000 students per year, and we could help nearly 260,000 American families keep their homes per year. In the fiscal year of 2008, we put \$159 billion into Iraq. That doubles our entire domestic transportation spending to fix roads and bridges, and it dwarfs all the funds we provide to the National Institutes of Health to discover cures for diseases such as cancer and diabetes. Iraq